Prelim Bits 21-12-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Dhangar Community in Maharashtra

The Dhangar community's demand for ST status has been dismissed.

- **Dhangars** – They are large cluster of ***pastoral groups*** and they live mostly in Western Maharashtra and Marathwada.
- **Population** – In Maharashtra, they are estimated to range from ***4 to 12% of the total*** population (unofficially estimate).
- **Reservation status** – In Maharashtra, there is an exclusive quota of 3.5% under a separate category called NT (No Tribe).
- In central list, they are recognised as Other Backward Classes (OBC) community.
- **Demand for ST status –** It started in 1955, when there was no reservation for them either in the state or at the Centre.

click here to know about 'Inclusion procedure in ST list'.

- **Reason for demand –** *Better constitutional safeguards to SC and ST* than to OBCs.

  Article 340 directs the President to constitute a commission to identify backward communities and make recommendations for their upliftment.

- *Discretion of executive government* in implementing welfare activities for OBC
  - The *1st BC commission's (Kaka Kelkar)* report came in 1955, whose recommendations were never implemented.
  - The *2nd BC Commission's (Mandal)* report came in 1980 whose recommendations were implemented partially only in 1990.

Historical background of Dhangar
• **Economic activity** – British identified 23 subgroups of the Dhangars, many specialising in livestock activities. • While mostly settled as agriculturalist, some within the cluster were nomadic. - The *Dange Dhangars herd buffaloes* in high-rainfall forest tracts of the Western Ghats. • **Social status** – British recognised them *as a tribe* for their nomadic nature and lower status in Maharashtra. • However, few were privileged and even have royal antecedents. - *Ahilyabai Holkar, the queen* who reigned the Malwa region in the 18th century was a Dhangar.

References

The Indian Express| Demand for ST status by Dhangar community

Sahitya Akademi Awards for 2023

The Sahitya Akademi Awards for 2023 were announced and will be presented at the award presentation function in 2024.

- **Established in** – 1954 ***by Sahitya Akademi***
- **Awarded to** – The most ***outstanding books of literary merit*** published in the languages recognised by the Sahitya Akademi.

The Sahitya Akademi*, India's National Academy of Letters was founded in 1954, an autonomous body under the Union Culture Ministry and registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. It is dedicated to the promotion of literature in Indian languages.*

- **The award** – It is in the form of a casket containing an *engraved copper-plaque, a shawl, and Rs.1,00,000* (since 2009).
- **Languages recognised** – ***24*** including *22 languages listed in 8th schedule* of Indian constitution along with *English and Rajasthan*.
- **Procedure** – The distinguished jury members recommend awards which are *approved by the Executive Board of the Akademi*.
- **Criteria** – It relate to books *1st published during the 5 years immediately preceding* the year of award.
- **2023 Awards** – 9 books of poetry, 6 novels, 5 short story collections, 3 essays and 1 literary study.

Language	Author	Type	Book
Tamil	Rajasekaran (Devibharathi)	Novel	Neervazhi Padooum
Telugu	Patanjali Sastry	Short story collection	Rameshwaram Kaakulu Marikonni Kathalu
Malayalam	E.V. Ramakrishnan	Literary study	Malayala Novelinte Deshakalangal
Kannada	Lakshmisha Tolpadi	Essay collections	Mahabharatha Anusandhanada Bharathayatre
Bengali	Swapnamay Chakrabarti	Novel	Jaler Upar Pani
English	Neelum Saran Gour	Novel	Requim in Raga Janaki
Hindi	Sanjeev	Novel	Mujhe Pahachaano.

Some authors who will receive the honour for their poetry collections are Vijay Verma in Dogri, Vinod Joshi in Gujarati, Manshoor Banihali in Kashmiri, Ashutosh Parida in Odia, and Arun Ranjan Mishra in Sanskrit.

References

1. The Hindu| Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023
2. Sahitya Akademi| Sahitya Akademi Awards

National Policy on Child Labour - An Assessment

Recently, a detailed report on the implementation of the Centre's policy on child labour was tabled in Parliament.

> *Based on the recommendations of Gurupadaswamy Committee, the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act was enacted in 1986 and the National Policy on Child Labour was declared in August, 1987.*

- **Prepared by** – The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour.
- **Findings** - The ***number of working children has decreased*** from 1.26 crore (2001 census) to 1.01 crore (2011 census) and has decreased from 57.79 lakh (2001 census) to 43.53 lakh (2011 census) in the age group of 5-14 years.
- It is practically not possible to meet the international commitment to ***eliminate child labour by 2025***.
- **Recommendation** – *Improve coordination* between various Ministries of the centre and the states.
- **Improve data collection** – Data on children between 14 to 18 years be collected during the next census exercise.
    - Ministry of Labour & Employment to *conduct periodic survey* particularly in urban areas to identify child labours.
    - Centre can direct *states to conduct surveys* along with their suggestions to address the problem.
- **Examine various child welfare acts –** To reduce any ambiguity or delay in securing justice for aggrieved children by rectifying the
    - Discrepancies in criteria of determining age of the child and the nature of offence as cognisable/non-cognisable

> *Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 are important child welfare acts.*

- **Award stricter punishments –** Like cancellation of license, attachment of property, etc., and *fix the accountability* on the principal employer and traffickers.

To know about Covid's impact on Child Labour**,** click here

Reference

The Hindu| National Policy on Child Labour – An Assessment

PM- AJAY

Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the welfare of Scheduled Caste (SC) population.

- **Launched in** – 2021-22.
- **Launched by** – Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- It has been framed after *merging the 3 erstwhile schemes*
    - Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)
    - Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP)
    - Babu Jagjivan Ram Chatrawas Yojana (BJRCY)
- **Objectives**
    - To ***increase the income of SC population*** by income generating schemes, skill development and infrastructure development.
    - To ***reduce the poverty among*** the SC population and bring them above the poverty lines.
    - To ***increase literacy and enrolment of SCs*** in schools and higher education institutions.
- **3 components**
    - Development of SC dominated villages into an *'Adarsh Gram'.*
    - *Grants-in-aid* for district/state-level projects for socio-economic betterment of SCs.
    - *Construction of hostels* in higher educational institutions.
- **Eligibility Criteria** - For income generating and skill development schemes, the *SC persons belonging to BPL category are eligible.*
- In case of infrastructure development, the *villages having 50% or more SC population* are eligible.
- **Coverage** – It is implemented in 28 States/UTs.
- **Budget** – It is Rs. 2050 crore for FY 2023-24.

References

1. PIB| PM-AJAY For Upliftment of SC Community
2. PMAJAY| Details of the Scheme PM-AJAY

Religious character of a place of worship

Recently, Allahabad High Court said that the religious character of a place of worship can be decided only in a trial.

- **Gyanvapi case** – The Hindu plaintiffs claim that the entire area, including the Gyanvapi mosque site, belonged to a temple of Swayambhu Lord Adi Vishweshwar.

A plaintiff is a person who starts a legal action against somebody in a court of

law.

- They said the temple was brought down by the 'Farman of Emperor Aurangzeb in the year 1669', much before the commencement of the 1991 Act.

Places of Worship Act, 1991 mandates that the religious identity of a place of worship, as it existed on August 15, 1947, should be retained except Ayodhya.

- **Court order** – *1991 Act is not an absolute bar* on litigants from approaching courts to define the religious character by referring to Sub-section (3) (d) of Section 4.
- A place of worship *cannot have a dual religious character* at the same time, rather it can be either a temple or a mosque.
- Religious character can *only be determined in a trial*, based on documentary and oral evidence, on a case-to-case basis.
- Once a temple always a temple is a judicially recognised principle of law.
- The religious character of Swayambhu deity *cannot be lost, not even by destruction*.

References

The Hindu| HC rulings on Religious character of place of worship

Other Important News
Blue dragons (Glaucus atlanticus) • The blue dragon (Glaucus atlanticus) is a small, shell-less, blue sea slug that floats upside down in the open ocean. • It is also known as the blue sea dragon, blue angel, sea swallow, and blue ocean slug. • They are found in tropical and subtropical waters throughout the ***Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans***. • Blue dragons are ***mobile prey feeders***, meaning they prey on organisms that move on their own. • **Conservation Status** - **IUCN –** Endangered.
Bhoomi Rashi Portal • **Aim –** It is a single point platform for online processing of land acquisition notifications to accelerate highway infrastructure development projects in India. • **Ministry -** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
Telecommunication Bill, 2023 • The Telecommunication Bill, 2023 seeks to replace the ***Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933.*** • The Bill seeks to reform and simplify the regulatory and licensing regime for telecommunications and remove bottlenecks in creating telecom infrastructure. • It also allows the government to temporarily take control of telecom services in the interest of national security and provide a non-auction route for the allocation of satellite spectrum.

Bills to replace criminal Laws

• The Lok Sabha recently passed 3 amended Bills that seek to repeal and replace criminal laws which date back to colonial times.
• The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill (BNSS) will replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860.
• The Bharatiya Sakshya Bill (BSS) will replace the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
• The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill (BNSSS) will replace the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project

• The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) is a 272-kilometer railway track that will connect the Kashmir Valley with the rest of India.
• The project was declared a ***"National Project"*** in 2002 due to its importance in providing seamless connectivity to Kashmir.
• ***Chenab Rail Bridge***, world's highest railway bridge, over the Chenab river in Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir is also a part of this project.

Ennore Creek

• The Ennore Creek is a backwater located in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu.
• As an arm of the Kosathalaiyar River, the Creek meets the Bay of Bengal at Mugathwara Kuppam, while the northern channel of the creek connects to the Pulicat Lake.
• This creek has been demarcated as ***Coastal Regulation Zone IV (Water Body)*** in the coastal zone management plan by the Tamil Nadu State Coastal Zone Management Authority.
• Undertaking any reclamation, bunding, construction or altering the water bodies is illegal under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 & Environment Protection Act, 1986.

Valmiki reserve

• Valmiki Tiger Reserve lies in the West Champaran district of Bihar.
• It forms the eastern most limit of the Himalayan Terai forests in India, and is the ***only tiger reserve of Bihar***.
• It is situated in the Gangetic plains and the forest has combination of bhabar and terai tracts.
• Rivers Gandak, Pandai, Manor, Harha, Masan and Bhapsa flow through various parts of the reserve.

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